

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY BONN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1463
INFO AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 04 BONN 15243

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1
TAGS: PDEV, MASS, PINT, UG, GW
SUBJECT: UGANDAN INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL SITUATION

SUMMARY: FRG AMBASSADOR TO UGANDA REPORTS THAT AMIN
REMAINS FIRMLY IN CONTROL. BILATERAL RELATIONS WITH
KENYA, TANZANIA, AND GABON MAY BE IMPROVING. ARAB
INFLUENCE IS GROWING. AMIN'S RELATIONS WITH COMMUNIST
STATES REMAIN VERY GOOD, IN SPITE OF SHORT-LIVED
CRITICISM OF SOVIET SUPPORT OF ANGOLA AND SHABA
INVASION. FRG AMBASSADOR CHARACTERIZES GERMAN-
UGANDAN RELATIONS AS RELATIVELY GOOD, ALTHOUGH HE
CAUTIONS THAT DISAPPOINTMENT CAUSED BY THREE-YEAR AID
HIATUS MAY LEAD TO FUTURE DIFFICULTIES. AMIN IS SEEN
AS WANTING IMPROVED RELATIONS WITH US. PROTECTION OF
US INTERESTS HAS CREATED NO PARTICULAR BURDEN FOR FRG
EMBASSY IN PAST SIX MONTHS. HIGH COFFEE PRICES HAVE
PARTIALLY SAVED UGANDAN ECONOMY FROM DISASTROUS EFFECTS
OF "ECONOMIC WAR" AGAINST ASIANS AND BRITISH RESIDENTS
AND MAY HELP IN ALLEVIATING BALANCE OF PAYMENT PROBLEMS.
END SUMMARY.

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THE FONOFF HAS GIVEN US A COPY OF FRG AMBASSADOR
FROEWIS' LATEST BIENNIAL REPORT ON THE POLITICAL SIT-
UATION IN UGANDA. COVERING THE PERIOD FEBRUARY THROUGH
AUGUST 1977, THIS COMPREHENSIVE REPORT IS AMBASSADOR
FROEWIS' RESPONSE TO A STANDING SET OF FONOFF REQUIRE-
MENTS AND WAS PASSED TO US ON THE UNDERSTANDING THAT IT
BE CLOSELY HELD. DEPARTMENT MAY WISH TO PASS TEXT TO

OTHER POSTS. (COMMENT: THIS IS THE FIRST OF THESE
REGULAR REPORTS THE FRG HAS SHARED WITH US. WE ASK
THAT ADDRESSEES PROTECT THE FACT WE HAVE SEEN IT. END
COMMENT.)

BEGIN TEXT:

DOMESTIC POLITICS

THE MONTHS SINCE THE MURDER OF THE ANGLICAN ARCHBISHOP
LUVUM AND TWO CABINET MEMBERS AND THE SUBSEQUENT WAVE
OF TERROR AGAINST POLITICALLY UNPOPULAR GROUPS IN
FEBRUARY AND MARCH 1977, WERE RELATIVELY QUIET. IN
MAY, A COUP D'ETAT AGAINST PRESIDENT AMIN WAS ATTEMPTED
WHICH APPEARED TO BE WELL ORGANIZED AND ALMOST LED TO
THE OVERTHROW OF AMIN'S REGIME. HOWEVER, RELATIVELY
SOON AFTER THE QUELLING OF THE PUTSCH, AMIN SUCCEEDED
IN REGAINING CONTROL OF THE COUNTRY. ONLY 14 DAYS
LATER HE COULD AFFORD TO TRAVEL TO THE SUMMIT CONFERENCE
IN LIBREVILLE.

AMIN'S POWER BASE CONTINUES TO BE THE ARMY. THE ARMY
BROUGHT HIM FORTH AND PROBABLY IS THE ONLY FORCE THAT
COULD OVERTHROW HIM. WITHIN THE ARMY AMIN LEANS
PRIMARILY ON UNITS WHICH, BECAUSE OF THEIR TRIBAL ORIGIN
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AND MOSLEM FAITH, FEEL ATTACHED TO HIM. AMIN'S
DEPENDENCE UPON THE MILITARY EXPLAINS THE FACT THAT HE
IS FREQUENTLY COMPELLED TO ACCEPT ITS EXCESSES AND
ARBITRARY ACTIONS AGAINST THE POPULATION.

THE PRESIDENT STANDS IN THE CENTER OF THE POLITICAL
SCENE. ALL INITIATIVES ORIGINATE WITH HIM. NO DECISION
OF ANY IMPORTANCE IS MADE WITHOUT HIM. BELOW AMIN,
VARIOUS RIVALING GROUPS OF OFFICERS ARE STRUGGLING FOR
INFLUENCE WITH, AND MAXIMUM PROXIMITY TO, THE PRESIDENT.
BY FREQUENTLY TRANSFERRING MILITARY LEADERS, AMIN HAS
SUCCEEDED IN KEEPING POSSIBLE COMPETITORS IN THE
MILITARY CAMP UNDER CONTROL.

THE MILITARY ELEMENT CLEARLY PREDOMINATES IN THE
CABINET AS WELL. MILITARY MEN HOLD THE MOST IMPORTANT
POSITIONS WITH THE MINISTRIES OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS,
INTERIOR, FINANCE, TRADE, INDUSTRY AND DEFENSE. THIS
TREND IS EVEN MORE PRONOUNCED IN THE PROVINCES; THE
GOVERNORS ARE EXCLUSIVELY RECRUITED FROM THE MILITARY.

AFTER THE BLOODY RIOTS IN FEBRUARY AND MARCH OF THIS

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YEAR, THE POPULATION'S REJECTION OF AMIN FURTHER INTE-
SIFIED. HOWEVER, NO ORGANIZED OPPOSITION CAN BE
IDENTIFIED WITH THE EXCEPTION OF THE GROUPS OF EXILES
WHICH FORMED IN KENYA AND TANZANIA. IT IS DIFFICULT TO
DETERMINE THEIR INFLUENCE ON UGANDA. THE INTELLIGEN-
TSIA, TO THE EXTENT THAT IT DID NOT EMIGRATE OR FALL
VICTIM TO PERSECUTION, RETIRES INTO ITSELF.

THE TWO CHRISTIAN CHURCHES, TO WHICH 80 PERCENT OF THE
POPULATION BELONG, STILL FORM SEPARATE ENTITIES WHICH
AMIN MISTRUSTS. SOONER OR LATER HE WILL SEEK TO
WEAKEN THEM. MOREOVER, AS A MUSLIM, HE PROMOTES THE
SPREADING OF HIS FAITH TO WHICH CURRENTLY ABOUT TEN
PERCENT OF THE POPULATION BELONGS.

FOREIGN POLICY

(1) PROMOTING A UNIFIED AND STRONG AFRICA MAY BE
CONSIDERED THE GENERAL LINE OF UGANDA'S FOREIGN POLICY.
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AMIN COUNTS ON THE POLITICAL SUPPORT OF THE ARABS AND THE MILITARY AID OF THE SOVIETS IN LIQUIDATING THE LAST BASTIONS OF WHITE DOMINATION. AS A MILITARY MAN AND MUSLIM, AMIN FEELS ALL THE MORE PREDESTINED TO PLAY A LEADING ROLE IN THIS RESPECT. VIS-A-VIS SOUTHERN AFRICA HE FOLLOWS AN EXTREME COURSE. HE REJECTED NEGOTIATIONS ON A PEACEFUL SETTLEMENT OF THE CONFLICTS IN RHODESIA, NAMIBIA AND SOUTH AFRICA.

AMIN HAS APPOINTED HIMSELF AS AN ADVOCATE OF THE PALESTINIAN CAUSE, LOUDLY PROCLAIMING THE EXTREME PALESTINIAN POSITIONS.

AS FAR AS OTHER INNER-AFRICAN CONFLICTS ARE CONCERNED (FOR EXAMPLE, ETHIOPIA, SOMALIA, SUDAN, AND THE WESTERN SAHARA), AMIN REMAINS NEUTRAL AND SEEKS, MOSTLY IN VAIN, TO OFFER HIMSELF AS A MEDIATOR IN SEARCH OF PEACEFUL SOLUTIONS.

AMIN HAS REALIZED THAT THE COLLAPSE OF THE EAST AFRICAN COMMUNITY MAY BE EXPECTED TO AFFECT UGANDA, PARTICULARLY SINCE IT IS A "LAND-LOCKED COUNTRY." AS RELATIONS BETWEEN KENYA AND TANZANIA DETERIORATED AND IN THE COURSE OF HIS (ABORTIVE) ATTEMPTS TO MAINTAIN THE EAC, AMIN'S RELATIONS WITH NAIROBI AND DAR ES SALAAM HAVE IMPROVED SLIGHTLY IN THE LAST SIX MONTHS. NEVERTHELESS, HE STILL FREQUENTLY ALLOWS HIMSELF TO BE CARRIED AWAY WITH VERBAL ATTACKS. HIS RELATIONS WITH SUDAN, ZAIRE AND RWANDA VARY FROM NORMAL TO GOOD. RECENTLY AMIN HAS DEVOTED SPECIAL ATTENTION TO CULTIVATING HIS RELATIONS WITH GABON.

(2) UGANDAN RELATIONS WITH THE ARAB COUNTRIES ARE
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PARTICULARLY CLOSE. IN THIS RESPECT AMIN IS FREQUENTLY FACED WITH A DILEMMA. HE DESIRES GOOD RELATIONS WITH ALL ARAB COUNTRIES EVEN THOUGH THEY ARE HOSTILE TO ONE ANOTHER. HE TAKES EVERY OPPORTUNITY TO OFFER HIMSELF AS A MEDIATOR. IT WOULD SEEM THAT, FROM THE POINT OF VIEW OF THE ARAB COUNTRIES, UGANDA PLAYS A NOT UNIMPORTANT POLITICAL ROLE, AS EVIDENCED BY INCREASING OFFERS OF DEVELOPMENT AND ECONOMIC AID. IT IS NOTICEABLE THAT UGANDA'S ECONOMIC LIFE IS INCREASINGLY INFLUENCED BY ARAB BUSINESSMEN.

(3) RELATIONS WITH THE COMMUNIST COUNTRIES, WHICH FOR A

TIME SEEMED TO DETERIORATE BECAUSE OF THE CONFLICT IN ZAIRE (AMIN THEN SHARPLY CONDEMNED THE ANGOLAN AGGRESSION IN ZAIRE AS WELL AS THE RUSSIANS WHO BACKED ANGOLA), HAVE IMPROVED. WITH ITS MILITARY AID IN THE FORM OF TANKS, MIG AIRCRAFT, ROCKETS AND RADAR INSTALLATIONS AND THE DISPATCH OF ABOUT 300 MILITARY ADVISERS, THE USSR HAS MANAGED TO BUILD UP A STRONG POSITION. IT WOULD BE A MISTAKE, THOUGH, TO TAKE AMIN FOR A PUPPET OF THE RUSSIANS. HE IS TOO MUCH AN AFRICAN AND TOO UNPREDICTABLE TO BE BOUND CLOSELY TO ANYONE. IN ADDITION TO THE USSR, THE GDR AND THE CSSR MAINTAIN DIPLOMATIC MISSIONS WHICH, IN A DIVISION OF WORK AMONG THE WARSAW PACT COUNTRIES, CONCENTRATE ON SPECIAL FIELDS, SUCH AS PILOT TRAINING, PUBLIC RELATIONS, SPORTS AND THE LIKE. AT THE BEGINNING OF THIS YEAR THE POLES CLOSED THEIR DIPLOMATIC MISSION IN UGANDA.

CHINA, WHICH ALSO MAINTAINS A RATHER STRONG REPRESENTATION IN KAMPALA, SEEKS TO CONTAIN THE RUSSIAN INFLU-

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ENCE AND, IN THIS CONNECTION, SEEKS TO COOPERATE WITH THE WEST. THROUGH A POLICY OF RESTRAINT AND UNSELFISH DEVELOPMENT AID, THE CHINESE HAVE WON THEMSELVES RECOGNITION AND ESTEEM.

CUBA, WHICH HAS BEEN REPRESENTED IN UGANDA SINCE THE MIDDLE OF LAST YEAR, MANAGED TO INTENSIFY ITS RELATIONS WITH UGANDA. THE RUMORS IN THE WESTERN PRESS THAT CUBA HAD STATIONED SOLDIERS IN UGANDA ARE INCORRECT.

(4) AMIN'S UNPREDICTABILITY AND DISTORTED VIEW OF HIS OWN IMPORTANCE AS WELL AS THE TERROR EMPLOYED AGAINST THE POPULATION BY HIS REGIME HAVE COST HIM ALL SYMPATHIES IN THE WESTERN COUNTRIES. IN COMPARISON, SIMILAR REACTIONS AMONG HIS AFRICAN NEIGHBORS ARE MORE LIMITED. THE APPLAUSE AND RECOGNITION AMIN WON AT THE OAU SUMMIT CONFERENCE IN LIBREVILLE SHOW CLEARLY THAT HE IS MEASURED BY DIFFERENT YARDSTICKS IN AFRICA. HIS BOASTFUL FEARLESSNESS AS WELL AS HIS HUMILIATING TREATMENT OF THE BRITISH EARNED HIM ADMIRATION IN BLACK
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AFRICA. THE BLACK MAN, WHO WAS ALL TOO FREQUENTLY HUMILIATED IN THE COLONIAL ERA, LIKES TO SEE THE WHITE MAN HUMILIATED.

(5) NOTWITHSTANDING HIS INCREASING POLITICAL ORIENTATION TOWARD THE EAST, AMIN FEELS LINKED WITH THE WESTERN COUNTRIES IN A STRANGE MIXTURE OF HATRED AND LOVE. HE DOES NOT DENY HIS COUNTRY'S BRITISH TRADITIONS AND, AS A PRACTING MUSLIM, HE REJECTS BOTH COMMUNIST IDEOLOGIES AND THE COMMUNIST SYSTEM. IT IRRITATES HIM THAT HIS APPROACHES TO THE WEST MEET WITH REJECTION. HE DOES NOT BLAME HIMSELF FOR THIS ATTITUDE, RATHER HE ACCUSES WESTERN PRESS WHICH HE FEELS TREATS HIM UNFAIRLY. NEVERTHELESS, HE GRANTS OCCASIONAL INTERVIEWS. RIGHT NOW AMIN CONSIDERS GREAT BRITAIN TO BE HIS MAIN ADVERSARY IN THE WESTERN CAMP WHICH HINDERS THE NORMALIZATION OF RELATIONS WITH THE OTHER WESTERN COUNTRIES, ESPECIALLY WITH THE UNITED STATES. AS FAR AS THE US IS CONCERNED, AMIN IS TRYING TO REFRAIN FROM ATTACKS AND TO SET UP GOOD ECONOMIC RELATIONS. THE SAME IS TRUE FOR FRANCE, ITALY AND THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY, THE ONLY WESTERN COUNTRIES WHICH CURRENTLY MAINTAIN DIPLOMATIC MISSIONS IN KAMPALA.

(6) FROM THE UGANDAN POINT OF VIEW, RELATIONS WITH THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY MAY BE CHARACTERIZED AS RELATIVELY GOOD. WE ENJOY A RELATIVELY STABLE POSITION AS THE ONLY WESTERN COUNTRY WHICH COMPLETES PREVIOUSLY PROMISED DEVELOPMENT AID PROJECTS. COMMERCIAL DEALS CONTRIBUTE TO STRENGTHENING OUR POSITION IN THIS COUNTRY. HOWEVER, THE UGANDANS REGRET THE FACT THAT THEIR EFFORTS TO INTENSIFY THEIR RELATIONS WITH THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY MEET WITH GREAT RESERVE IN

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BONN. IN THE PAST THREE YEARS WE HAVE NOT APPROVED ANY NEW DEVELOPMENT AID--NEITHER BILATERAL NOR WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE EC--AND IT MUST BE FEARED THAT THE PRESENT STATE OF RELATIONS MAY DETERIORATE. A CHANGE OF CLIMATE WOULD GREATLY REDUCE THE POSSIBILITIES OF THIS EMBASSY SUCCESSFULLY TO INTERVENE IN BEHALF OF ARRESTED GERMANS AND AMERICANS.

OUR REPRESENTATION OF THE INTERESTS OF AMERICAN CITIZENS ALSO ACTS AS A BURDEN ON GERMAN-UGANDAN RELATIONS AT TIMES. AMIN ALL TOO EASILY TENDS TO EQUATE THE GERMANS WITH THE AMERICANS. IN THE PAST SIX MONTHS, HOWEVER, NO PROBLEMS HAVE ARISEN IN THIS RESPECT.

IT IS OBVIOUS THAT A GOVERNMENT COMMITTED TO HUMAN AND CIVIL RIGHTS CANNOT CLOSELY COOPERATE WITH A REGIME OF VIOLENCE. IT WOULD SEEM, THOUGH, THAT WE DID NOT ACT WITH SIMILAR CONSISTENCY IN OTHER CASES, AS FOR INSTANCE IN ETHIOPIA AND LAOS WHERE MORE PEOPLE HAVE LOST THEIR LIVES THAN IN UGANDA.

(7) AS FAR AS INTERNATIONAL AND REGIONAL ORGANIZATIONS ARE CONCERNED, UGANDA IS A MEMBER OF THE UNITED NATIONS, THE COMMONWEALTH, THE OAU AND THE EAST AFRICAN COMMUNITY WHICH, HOWEVER, IS ABOUT TO COLLAPSE. UGANDA TAKES ITS MEMBERSHIP WITH INTERNATIONAL AND REGIONAL ORGANIZATIONS SERIOUSLY AND DISPATCHES HIGH-RANKING DELEGATIONS, ESPECIALLY TO THE UNITED NATIONS, WHICH ADVOCATE IDI AMIN'S FREQUENTLY EXTREME POSITIONS.

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FM AMEMBASSY BONN

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INFO AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

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ECONOMIC POLICY

AS A RESULT OF THE "ECONOMIC WAR" BEGINNING IN 1972--
THE EXTRADITION OF THE ASIATICS AND THE EXPROPRIATION
OF BRITISH ENTREPRENEURS IN FAVOR OF THE BLACK
AFRICANS--UGANDA HAS SUFFERED GRAVE ECONOMIC SETBACKS.
IT WAS ONLY IN THE PAST TWELVE MONTHS THAT, BENEFITTING
FROM HIGH COFFEE PRICES ON THE WORLD MARKET, THE EFFORTS
AT CONSOLIDATION SHOWED THE FIRST POSITIVE RESULTS. THE
DECREASE OF THE GROSS NATIONAL PRODUCT AMOUNTED TO
ONLY 0.4 PERCENT.

IN REAL TERMS, THE ECONOMIC AID FROM ABROAD STAGNATED
AT THE LEVEL ATTAINED IN 1967. THE ARAB COUNTRIES HAVE
REPLACED THE WESTERN COUNTRIES IN THE ROLE OF THE BIG
DONORS. SINCE UGANDA'S DIPLOMATIC BREAK WITH ISRAEL,
THE SOVIET UNION CONCENTRATED ON SUPPLYING WEAPONS.

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THE NATIONALIZATION MEASURES OF THE ECONOMIC WAR ALSO
RUINED THE DEVELOPMENT PLAN FOR THE FIVE-YEAR PERIOD
FROM 1971 TO 1976. INSTEAD OF ANOTHER FIVE-YEAR
PLAN, THE UGANDAN GOVERNMENT PROCLAIMED A THREE-YEAR
ACTION PROGRAM FOR THE PERIOD FROM JULY 1, 1977 TO
JUNE 30, 1980. IT CONCENTRATES ON RE-STARTING
EXISTING FACTORIES, INCREASING THE PRODUCTION OF
EXPORT GOODS AND IMPROVING PRODUCTIVITY IN THE
TRANSPORTATION SECTOR. AT THE SAME TIME, INFLATION
IS TO BE CURBED.

NOTWITHSTANDING THESE GOOD INTENTIONS THE PRODUCTION
OF COFFEE, COTTON, TEA AND COPPER MAY BE EXPECTED
TO DECLINE IN THE CURRENT FISCAL YEAR. AT THE SAME
TIME, AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION FOR THE PEASANTS' OWN
USE MAY BE EXPECTED TO INCREASE. PROVIDED THAT
COFFEE PRICES REMAIN AS HIGH AS THEY ARE NOW, AND

PROVIDED THAT THE CURB ON IMPORTS CONTINUES, UGANDA
MAY NEVERTHELESS SUCCEED IN ATTAINING A BALANCED
BALANCE OF PAYMENTS.

FOR YEARS THERE HAVE BEEN NO MORE FOREIGN PRIVATE
INVESTMENTS.

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